THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has noted the US practice of issuing global reports on such subjects and stated that such reports by their very nature are based on US view points and preconceptions and rejected any judgemental and prescriptive approach by a foreign Government. India and US have an ongoing dialogue on the subject of trafficking in persons and other trans-national challenges and the approach of the 2006 report does not reflect the active cooperation on this subject between the two countries and is certainly not helpful to furthering our dialogue in this regard.

(c) The Government is of the opinion that there is sufficient recognition within India of the problem of trafficking. An elaborate mechanism of constitutional and other laws and regulations, an independent judiciary and free media exist within the country for the redressal of the problem. The Government is also currently considering additional steps to deal with this problem, including cooperating with other countries,. It does not consider that a judgemental and prescriptive approach to the problem by a foreign country is helpful in dealing with the problem.

(d) For countries on theTier 2 "Watch List", the US Secretary of State is required to submit to the US Congress, an "interim assessment" of anti-trafficking efforts of that country in February of each year.

Requests for Kuwait war compensation

*68. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of requests for the Kuwait war compensation from the large number of people from Kerala;

(b) whether Government have requested to the United Nations Compensation Commission to extend the prescribed time limit for the submission of applications; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) A Total of 33116 persons from Kerala had applied for compensation within the deadline of 1st January, 1996,

as stipulated by the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC). Of these, claims of 31,817 persons have already been settled. A total amount of approx. US$ 250 million has already been paid to them by the UNCC.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has requested the UNCC to extend the prescribed time limit for submission of applications on several occasions. So far, UNCC has expressed its inability to accede to the requests of Government of India for extension of the deadline of 1st January, 1996 for acceptance of new claims.

Committee for unbundling of copper cables

*69. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:
SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Committee has been set up for unbundling of copper cables of BSNL/MTNL;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the terms of reference of the Committee alongwith the names of Members thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) An Inter-Ministerial Committee on Information, Communication and Entertainment (ICE) under the Chairmanship of Principal Secretary to Prime Minister was constituted by Prime Minister's Office to examine issues and new opportunities in the areas of information, communication and entertainment. Based upon its deliberations, it was suggested that six sub-groups may be constituted for specific areas like Broadband development, animation and gaming, going digital, forming out surplus bandwidth, unbundling the local loop and creating a global presence for strategic purposes. Based upon the deliberations in the meeting of committee on ICE, Department of Telecommunications constituted a subgroup to discuss issues pertaining to unbundling of local loops.